

That most harrowing band of players

The English Class in Performance

does with much fear and trembling present

the most terrifying and supernatural tragedy of

Macbeth

the tyrant of Scotland,

penned by that very laudable playwright

Master William Shakespeare

and edited by the degenerate rascalion

Shawn Peters.

Dramatis Personae

Macbeth: Ambitious warrior; Scottish lord; Thane of Glamis. (Props: a sword, two bloody daggers, fake blood for his hands)

Lady Macbeth: Macbeth's scheming wife. (Props: letter, fake blood for her hands)

The Three Witches (Props: a pilot's thumb, a cauldron, various unspeakable things to throw into the cauldron)

Duncan: Kind and cheerful king of Scotland. (Props: a crown, which Macbeth will wear later)

Malcolm: Gentle prince of Scotland, Duncan's son.

Donalbain: Also Duncan's son.

Banquo: Macbeth's noble friend. (Props: a sword; also a crown, a mirror and a robe for when he comes on as part of the witches' vision)

Fleance: Banquo's son. (Props: a torch or lantern)

MacDuff: Honourable Scottish lord; Thane of Fife. (Props: a sword, Macbeth's severed head for the final scene)

Lady MacDuff: MacDuff's wife.

MacDuff's Son

The Three Murderers: Hired by Macbeth. (Props: swords or knives)

The Porter: A servant at Macbeth's castle. (Props: optional bottle of alcohol)

Lennox: A Scottish lord.

Ross: A Scottish lord.

Angus: A Scottish lord.

Siward: An English lord.

Young Siward: His son. (Props: a sword)

Seyton: Macbeth's servant. (Props: Macbeth's armour)

Messenger: in Macbeth's employ.

Sergeant: a soldier in Duncan's army (Props: blood/injury).

Doctor: Lady Macbeth's doctor.

Waiting-gentlewoman: A maid to Lady Macbeth.

The Three Apparitions: Spirits conjured by the witches.
(Props: the first needs a helmet or other soldier accoutrements; the second needs blood smeared on its face; the third needs a crown and a branch)

(Other props: the lords and Malcolm should be armed in the final scenes when they are attacking Macbeth's castle; also, a bell to be rung offstage before Duncan's murder)

Staging: The back of the stage, or a back corner, should be kept dark. The witches, spirits and ghosts may retreat into this dark and become invisible to the other characters on stage.

Doubling: Can double the Sergeant with the Porter and/or Angus. Can double the murderers with the apparitions. The witches can double as anyone but Macbeth, Banquo, and the apparitions.

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ACT I

SCENE I. A desert place.

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches

First Witch: When shall we three meet again in thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch: When the hurlyburly's done, when the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch: That will be ere the set of sun.

First Witch: Where the place?

Second Witch: Upon the heath.

Third Witch: There to meet with Macbeth.

ALL: *(chanting, as if casting a spell)* Fair is foul, and foul is fair: hover through the fog and filthy air.

Exeunt

SCENE II. A camp near Forres.

Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX. A wounded sergeant enters from the opposite side. Lennox runs to assist him.

DUNCAN: What bloody man is that?

MALCOLM: This is the sergeant. Say to the king the knowledge of the broil as thou didst leave it.

Sergeant: (*panting and in pain*) Doubtful it stood. The merciless Macdonwald-- worthy to be a rebel, for to that the multiplying villanies of nature do swarm upon him--from the western isles is supplied. And Fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling, show'd like a rebel's whore. But all's too weak, for brave Macbeth, disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel which smoked with bloody execution, like valour's minion carved out his passage till he faced the slave and unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps.

DUNCAN: O valiant cousin!

Sergeant: (*interrupting*) Mark, king of Scotland, mark: no sooner justice had with valour arm'd compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels, but the Norwegian lord, surveying vantage, began a fresh assault.

DUNCAN: Dismay'd not this our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

Sergeant: Yes; as sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion. If I say sooth, I must report they were as cannons overcharged with double cracks, so they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe... (*exhausted*) But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

DUNCAN: (*to Lennox*) Go get him surgeons.

Lennox leads the sergeant out. Enter ROSS, who kneels before the king..

ROSS: God save the king!

DUNCAN: Whence camest thou, worthy thane?

ROSS: From Fife, great king; Where the Norwegian banners flout the sky and fan our people cold. Norway himself, with terrible numbers, assisted by that most disloyal traitor the thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict, till that Bellona's bridegroom confronted him point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm, curbing his lavish spirit: and, to conclude, the victory fell on us.

DUNCAN: Great happiness! No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive our bosom interest. (*to Ross*) Go pronounce his present death, and with his former title greet Macbeth.

ROSS: I'll see it done.

DUNCAN: What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath won.

Exeunt

SCENE III. A heath near Forres.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches

First Witch: Where hast thou been, sister?

Second Witch: Killing swine.

Third Witch: Sister, where thou?

First Witch: A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap, and munch'd and munch'd and munch'd. 'Give me,' quoth I. 'Aroint thee, witch!' the rump-fed ronyon cries.

The witches gasp. They are all insulted by this treatment, and decide to punish the woman.

First Witch: Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the *Tiger*. In a sieve I'll thither sail, and like a rat without a tail, I'll do, I'll do, I'll do.

Second Witch: I'll give thee a wind.

Third Witch: And I another.

First Witch: I myself have all the other. Sleep shall neither night nor day hang upon his pent-house lid. He shall live a man forbid. Though his bark cannot be lost, yet it shall be tempest-tost.

The Third Witch offers the thumb of a sailor to finish the spell.

Third Witch: Here I have a pilot's thumb, wreck'd as homeward he did come.

She places the thumb on the ground. They join hands in a circle around it and chant.

ALL: The weird sisters, hand in hand, posters of the sea and land, thus do go about, about. Thrice to thine and thrice to mine and thrice again, to make up nine.

Second Witch: Peace! The charm's wound up.

The witches retreat to the back of the stage, out of the main light. Enter MACBETH and BANQUO.

MACBETH: So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

The witches step forward and show themselves. Macbeth and Banquo are so startled they almost draw their swords.

BANQUO: What are these, so wither'd and so wild in their attire, that look not like the inhabitants o' the earth, and yet are on't?

MACBETH: Speak, if you can: what are you?

The witches make a prophecy.

First Witch: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

Second Witch: All hail, Macbeth. Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

Third Witch: All hail, Macbeth. Thou shalt be king hereafter!

BANQUO: If you *can* look into the seeds of time, speak then to me.

First Witch: Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

Second Witch: Not so happy, yet much happier.

Third Witch: Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.

ALL: Banquo and Macbeth, all hail! (*they bow, as if to kings*)

MACBETH: I know I am thane of Glamis, but how of Cawdor? Say from whence you owe this strange intelligence!

Cackling, the witches step backwards out of the light. Macbeth and Banquo are again shocked, because to them, it is as if the witches turn invisible.

BANQUO: Whither are they vanish'd?

MACBETH: Into the air; and what seem'd corporal melted as breath into the wind.

At first, they think it's a joke.

MACBETH: *(sarcastic)* Your children shall be kings.

BANQUO: *(sarcastic)* You shall *be* king.

MACBETH: *(chuckling)* And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

They laugh. Enter ROSS and ANGUS

BANQUO: Who's here?

ROSS: The king hath happily received, Macbeth, the news of thy success.

ANGUS: We are sent to give thee from our royal master thanks.

ROSS: He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor.

MACBETH: *(shocked)* The thane of Cawdor lives. Why do you dress me in borrow'd robes?

ANGUS: Under heavy judgment bears that life which he deserves to lose. Treasons capital, confess'd and proved, have overthrown him.

Macbeth pulls Banquo aside.

BANQUO: *(to Macbeth)* What, can the devil speak true?

MACBETH: Do you not hope your children shall be kings?

BANQUO: *(warning)* 'Tis strange: oftentimes, to win us to our harm, the instruments of darkness tell us truths.

Banquo goes to Ross and Angus and speaks silently with them. Macbeth wanders to the front of the stage to speak an aside.

MACBETH: *(aside)* Cannot be ill, cannot be good. If ill, why hath it given me earnest of success? If good, why do I yield to that suggestion whose horrid image doth unfix my hair? If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me, without my stir.

Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX. Ross, Angus, Macbeth and Banquo bow to the king.

DUNCAN: *(Spotting Macbeth)* O worthiest cousin! More is thy due than more than all can pay.

MACBETH: The service and the loyalty I owe, in doing it, pays itself.

DUNCAN: Noble Banquo, that hast no less deserved, let me enfold thee and hold thee to my heart.

Duncan clasps Banquo on the shoulder, then turns to address all the lords.

DUNCAN: Sons, kinsmen, thanes. Know we will establish our estate upon our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter the Prince of Cumberland.

The king and the lords slowly exit, leaving Macbeth alone on stage as he speaks.

MACBETH: *(aside)* The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step on which I must fall down, or else o'erleap. *(to the sky)* Stars, hide your fires. Let not light see my black and deep desires:

Exit

SCENE IV. Inverness. Macbeth's castle.

Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a letter

LADY MACBETH: Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be what thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature. It is too full o' the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way.

Enter a messenger

LADY MACBETH: What is your tidings?

Messenger: Lady, the king come here tonight.

Messenger bows and exits.

LADY MACBETH: The raven himself is hoarse that croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan under my battlements. Come, you spirits that tend on mortal thoughts -- unsex me here, fill me from the crown to the toe top-full of direst cruelty! Come, thick night, and pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell, that my keen knife see not the wound it makes, nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark, to cry 'Hold, hold!'

Enter Macbeth.

LADY MACBETH: Great Glamis! Worthy Cawdor! Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!

MACBETH: My dearest love, Duncan comes here to-night.

LADY MACBETH: O, never shall sun that morrow see! Your face, my thane, is as a book where men may read strange matters. To beguile the time, look like the time; bear welcome in your eye, your hand, your tongue. Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under't.

MACBETH: *(nodding)* We will speak further.

Exeunt together.

SCENE V. Macbeth's castle.

Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS from one side, LADY MACBETH from the other.

DUNCAN: This castle hath a pleasant seat. (*sees Lady Macbeth*) Our honour'd hostess! Where's the thane of Cawdor?

Lady Macbeth leads them offstage to one side, while Macbeth comes on behind them, and watches them go. He struggles with his conscience

MACBETH: He's here in double trust. First, as I am his kinsman and his subject, strong both against the deed; then, as his host, who should against his murderer shut the door, not bear the knife myself. I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent, but only vaulting ambition

Lady Macbeth re-enters.

MACBETH: (*to Lady Macbeth*) We will proceed no further in this business.

LADY MACBETH: Was the hope drunk wherein you dress'd yourself? Art thou afraid to be the same in thine own act as thou art in desire?

MACBETH: Prithee, peace. I dare do all that may become a man; who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH: (*goads him*) When you durst do it, then you were a man. I have given suck, and know how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me. I would, while it was smiling in my face, have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums, and dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you have done to this!

MACBETH: If we should fail...?

LADY MACBETH: (*offended at his weakness*) We fail! But screw your courage to the sticking-place, and we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep, his two chamberlains will I with wine and wassail so convince that memory shall be a fume What then cannot you and I perform upon the unguarded Duncan?

MACBETH: (*impressed*) Bring forth men-children only, for thy undaunted mettle should compose nothing but males. Will it not be received, when we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two and used their very daggers, that they have done't?

LADY MACBETH: Who dares receive it other?

MACBETH: I am settled. Away, and mock the time with fairest show. False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

Lady Macbeth nods and walks offstage smiling. Macbeth looks out above the audience, and seems to see something hovering there.

MACBETH: Is this a dagger which I see before me, the handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee. (*tries to grab the invisible dagger*) I have thee not, and yet I see thee still. Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible to feeling as to sight? Or art thou but a dagger of the mind, proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain? And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood. It is the bloody business which informs thus to mine eyes.

A bell rings offstage.

MACBETH: I go, and it is done; the bell invites me. Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell that summons thee to heaven or to hell.

Exit

ACT II

SCENE I. Court of Macbeth's castle.

Enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH: He is about it. The doors are open, and the grooms do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd their possets.

MACBETH: *(offstage)* Who's there?

LADY MACBETH: *(startled)* Alack, I am afraid they have awaked, and 'tis not done. The attempt and not the deed confounds us. I laid their daggers ready; he could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done't.

Enter Macbeth, with bloody hands, carrying in his left hand two bloody daggers. He holds these low, at his side, so that Lady Macbeth cannot see them yet.

MACBETH: I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

LADY MACBETH: I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.

Macbeth raises his right hand and looks upon the blood.

MACBETH: *(beginning to panic)* This is a sorry sight.

LADY MACBETH: A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

MACBETH: (*panicking*) There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried 'Murder!' One cried 'God bless us!' and 'Amen' the other. I could not say 'Amen.' Wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen'? I was much in need of blessing.

LADY MACBETH: Consider it not so deeply.

MACBETH: Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep. Macbeth shall sleep no more.'

LADY MACBETH: (*trying to calm him down*) Go get some water and wash this filthy witness from your hand.

She takes his hands to lead him away, and then sees the bloody daggers.

LADY MACBETH: (*shocked*) Why did you bring these daggers from the place? They must lie there!

MACBETH: I'll go no more.

LADY MACBETH: Infirm of purpose!

She snatches the daggers from him and runs out the way Macbeth had come in. A loud knock offstage. Macbeth is badly startled.

MACBETH: Whence is that knocking? (*he calms down a bit and looks at his hands*) O, will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?

Lady Macbeth re-enters, without the daggers, but with her hands also covered in blood. She shows them to Macbeth.

LADY MACBETH: My hands are of your colour, but I *shame* to wear a heart so white!

Another knock.

LADY MACBETH: Retire we to our chamber. A little water clears us of this deed.

She takes Macbeth's hand and drags him off. Macbeth shouts as he leaves.

MACBETH: Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!

Exeunt.

SCENE II. The same.

Knocking within. Enter a Porter

Porter: Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub? (*pretending to be the hanged farmer, knocking at the door*) Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty.

Knocking within.

Porter: Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name? (*pretending to be the equivocator*) Faith, here's an equivocator, who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven.

Knocking within.

Porter: Knock, knock; never at quiet!

*Goes to the side of the stage and mimes opening a door.
MACDUFF and LENNOX enter from that place.*

MACDUFF: Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed, that you do lie so late?

Porter: 'Faith sir, we were carousing, and drink, sir, is a great provoker of three things.

MACDUFF: (*humouring him*) What three things does drink especially provoke?

Porter: Nose-painting, sleep, and urine.

The Porter laughs loudly. Macduff rolls his eyes and looks impatient.

MACDUFF: Is thy master stirring?

Porter: Thy knocking has awaked him.

The porter shuffles off the way Macduff and Lennox entered, and Macbeth comes in from the opposite side, his hands clean.

MACBETH: Good morrow, both.

MACDUFF: Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

MACBETH: I'll bring you to him.

Macbeth escorts Macduff to the opposite side the stage (where Macbeth entered) and shows him out as if through a door. Macbeth remains on stage with Lennox.

LENNOX: (*making conversation*) The night has been unruly. Where we lay, our chimneys were blown down; and, lamentings heard i' the air; strange screams of death.

MACBETH: 'Twas a rough night.

Macduff comes running back on, cringing with horror.

MACDUFF: O horror!

LENNOX: What's the matter?

MACDUFF: Most sacrilegious murder hath broke open the Lord's anointed temple!

LENNOX: Mean you his majesty?

Macbeth sneaks off-stage towards Duncan's room as Macduff raises the alarm.

MACDUFF: Awake, awake! Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason!

Enter Banquo and Lady Macbeth, running at the alarm.

MACDUFF: O Banquo, Banquo! Our royal master 's murder'd!

LADY MACBETH: What, in our house?

BANQUO: Too cruel anywhere.

Macduff shares a quick, silent word with Lennox, explaining what he saw. Enter Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons. Macbeth also walks quietly back on, unseen.

DONALBAIN: What is amiss?

MACDUFF: Your royal father 's murder'd.

LENNOX: Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done't: their hands and faces were an badged with blood. So were their daggers.

MACBETH: *(pretending to be very distressed)* O, yet I do repent me of my fury, that I did kill them.

MACDUFF: Wherefore did you so?

MACBETH: Here lay Duncan, his silver skin laced with his golden blood; there, the murderers, steep'd in the colours of their trade. Who could refrain, that had a heart to love?

Lady Macbeth starts to become nervous that Macbeth might give it away, and fakes fainting.

LADY MACBETH: Help me hence, ho!

Faints.

MACDUFF: Look to the lady.

Everyone runs to help Lady Macbeth except for Malcolm and Donalbain.

MALCOLM: *(Aside to Donalbain)* Most may claim this argument for ours.

DONALBAIN: *(to Malcolm, nodding)* Let 's away.

MALCOLM: I'll to England.

DONALBAIN: To Ireland, I.

The rest carry Lady Macbeth out one way. Malcolm and Donalbain leave by the opposite.

ACT III

SCENE I. Forres. The palace.

Enter BANQUO

BANQUO: Thou hast it now, as the weird women promised, and, I fear thou play'dst most foully for't. Yet it was said that myself should be the root and father of many kings...

Macbeth walks in, seeming very cheerful, with Duncan's crown on his head. He is now king.

MACBETH: Here's our chief guest. Ride you this afternoon?

BANQUO: Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH: We should have else desired your good advice. Fail not our feast.

BANQUO: My lord, I will not.

Exit Banquo. He still seems suspicious of Macbeth, and Macbeth smiles a little too much. When Banquo is gone, Macbeth lets his frustration show.

MACBETH: To be thus is nothing, but to be *safely* thus! They hail'd him father to a line of kings. Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown.

Enter the first two murderers.

MACBETH: All of you know Banquo was your enemy. So is he mine. I will put that business in your bosoms, whose execution takes your enemy off.

First Murderer: We shall perform what you command us.

MACBETH: I will advise you where to plant yourselves, for't must be done to-night. Fleance his son, must also embrace the fate of that dark hour.

Second Murderer: We are resolved, my lord.

The murderers creep off. Lady Macbeth enters from the opposite side. Lady Macbeth has grown worried, since Macbeth seems to be keeping his plans to himself lately.

LADY MACBETH: How now, my lord? Why do you keep alone? What's done is done.

MACBETH: (*frustrated*) We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it.

LADY MACBETH: Gentle my lord, be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.

MACBETH: O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife! Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

LADY MACBETH: And what's to be done?

MACBETH: Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, till thou applaud the deed. Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.

They exit together to go to the feast, Lady Macbeth looking worried.

SCENE II. A park near the palace.

Enter all three Murderers. They crouch down and hide near the back of the stage.

Third Murderer: Hark! I hear horses.

BANQUO: *(Offstage)* Give us a light there, ho!

Second Murderer: 'Tis he.

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE, with a torch

BANQUO: *(casual conversation)* It will be rain to-night.

The three murderers jump out of hiding and attack Banquo.

First Murderer: Let it come down!

BANQUO: O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly!

Fleance runs back the way he came while Banquo holds the three murderers at bay. They surround him and kill him.

Third Murderer: There's but one down. The son is fled.

Second Murderer: We have lost best half of our affair.

Exeunt

SCENE III. A hall in the palace.

Enter MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, ANGUS.

MACBETH: *(Addressing his guests)* Be large in mirth; anon we'll drink a measure the table round.

Lady Macbeth leads the guests to their places, where they sit in preparation for a feast. One place in the centre is left empty for Macbeth. They talk silently, while Macbeth heads to the side of the stage farthest from the guests. The First Murderer enters to meet him and they talk quietly.

MACBETH: There's blood on thy face.

First Murderer: 'Tis Banquo's then.

MACBETH: Is he dispatch'd?

First Murderer: My lord, his throat is cut

MACBETH: Thou art the best o' the cut-throats: yet he's good that did the like for Fleance.

First Murderer: Most royal sir, Fleance is 'scaped.

MACBETH: *(distressed)* I had else been perfect, but now I am cabin'd to saucy doubts and fears.

The lords have noticed Macbeth's absence. Lady Macbeth approaches Macbeth to draw him to dinner. He notices her and quickly dismisses the murderer.

MACBETH: *(To the murderer)* Get thee gone.

Exit Murderer.

LADY MACBETH: My royal lord, you do not give the cheer.

The GHOST OF BANQUO enters, his face coated in blood, and sits in MACBETH's place. No one can see him except Macbeth.

ROSS: Please't your highness to grace us with your royal company.

MACBETH: The table's full

LENNOX: *(pointing to the ghost)* Here is a place reserved, sir.

Macbeth sees the ghost and points to it, horrified.

MACBETH: *(to the lords)* Which of you have done this?

LENNOX: What, my good lord?

MACBETH: *(to the ghost)* Never shake thy gory locks at me!

LADY MACBETH: Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus. The fit is momentary. *(She pulls Macbeth away from them and speaks to him in a whisper)* Shame itself! Why do you make such faces? When all's done, you look but on a stool.

The GHOST gets up and walks to the back, standing there invisible. Macbeth seems to calm down.

MACBETH: If I stand here, I saw him.

LADY MACBETH: Fie, for shame!

MACBETH: The times have been, that, when the brains were out, the man would die.

LADY MACBETH: My worthy lord, your noble friends do lack you.

Macbeth recovers and turns to address the table.

MACBETH: Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends. Drink to the general joy o' the whole table, and to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss.

The lords raise their cups in a toast, and the Ghost steps forward, becoming visible again.

MACBETH: *(panicking, to the ghost)* Avaunt and quit my sight! Hence, horrible shadow!

The lords stand with the intention of helping their king. Lady Macbeth gestures for them to stop.

LADY MACBETH: I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse. At once, good night.

She pushes Macbeth to the edge of the stage.

LENNOX: Better health attend his majesty.

The lords, confused, file out the other way.

MACBETH: *(to Lady Macbeth)* I will to-morrow to the weird sisters. More shall they speak.

Lady Macbeth pushes him offstage.

ACT IV

SCENE I. A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron.

Thunder. Enter the Three Witches. One carries a cauldron, and sets it down in centre-stage. The three gather around it. They throw things into the cauldron as they speak.

First Witch: Round about the cauldron go. In, the poison'd entrails throw.

ALL: *(chanting)* Double, double toil and trouble. Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Second Witch: Fillet of a fenny snake, in the cauldron boil and bake. Eye of newt and toe of frog, wool of bat and tongue of dog.

ALL: Double, double toil and trouble. Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Third Witch: Liver of blaspheming Jew. Gall of goat, and slips of yew silver'd in the moon's eclipse. Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips.

ALL: Double, double toil and trouble. Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Second Witch: Cool it with a baboon's blood, then the charm is firm and good.

First Witch: By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes.

Enter MACBETH

MACBETH: You black and midnight hags! What is't you do?

ALL: A deed without a name.

MACBETH: Answer me to what I ask you.

First Witch: Speak.

Second Witch: Demand.

Third Witch: We'll answer.

First Witch: Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths, or from our masters'?

Macbeth: Call 'em! Let me see 'em.

ALL: (*conjuring the spirits*) Come, high or low, thyself and office deftly show!

Thunder. The apparitions and the ghost enter at the back, standing in the dark. The First Apparition steps forward: an armed Head or soldier.

First Witch: He knows thy thought.

First Apparition: Macbeth! Beware Macduff! Beware the thane of Fife!

The apparition steps back into the dark.

MACBETH: Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks.

The Second Apparition steps forward: a bloody child.

Second Apparition: Macbeth! Laugh to scorn the power of man, for none of woman born shall harm Macbeth.

Second Apparition steps back.

MACBETH: Then live, Macduff. What need I fear of thee?

Third Apparition steps forward: a child crowned, with a tree in his hand.

Third Apparition: Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill shall come against him.

Third Apparition steps back.

MACBETH: That will never be. Who can bid the tree unfix his earth-bound root? (*He speaks to the weird sisters*) Tell me: shall Banquo's issue ever reign in this kingdom?

ALL: Show!

The Ghost of Banquo steps forward, this time dressed in king's robes, with a crown on his head and a mirror in his hands.

MACBETH: Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo, who bears a glass which shows me many more. Now, I see, 'tis true!

The Ghost vanishes. The witches pick up their cauldron and leave the stage while Macbeth is watching after the ghost. He turns around and they are gone.

MACBETH: Where are they? Infected be the air whereon they ride!

He thinks for a moment about the spirits' prophecies and comes to a decision

MACBETH: The castle of Macduff I will surprise, give to the edge o' the sword his wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls that trace him in his line.

Exit.

SCENE II. Fife. Macduff's castle.

Enter LADY MACDUFF and her Son. Macduff has fled to England to join Malcolm.

LADY MACDUFF: *(Thinking aloud)* To leave his wife, to leave his babes, his mansion and his titles in a place from whence himself does fly? *(She speaks to her son).* How wilt thou do for a father?

Son: Nay, how will you do for a husband?

LADY MACDUFF: Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

Son: Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

LADY MACDUFF: Thou speak'st with all thy wit: and yet, i' faith, with wit enough for thee.

Son: *(sadly)* Was my father a traitor, mother?

LADY MACDUFF: Ay, that he was.

The three murderers run onstage with knives in their hands. Lady Macduff stands and hides her son behind her.

First Murderer: Where is your husband?

Second Murderer: He's a traitor.

Son: Thou liest, thou shag-hair'd villain!

The Son runs at the First Murderer and attacks him.

First Murderer: Young fry of treachery!

The murderer stabs him and throws him to the ground.

Son: He has killed me, mother!

The son dies. Lady Macduff runs off screaming, away from the murderers. They follow her off. The screaming stops abruptly.

SCENE III. England. Before the King's palace.

Enter MALCOLM and MACDUFF

MACDUFF: Not in all the legions of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd in evils to top Macbeth.

MALCOLM: Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men, already was setting forth. Now we'll together.

MACDUFF: Such welcome and unwelcome things at once.

Enter ROSS, looking sad.

MACDUFF: Stands Scotland where it did?

ROSS: Alas, poor country, almost afraid to know itself.

MALCOLM: What's the newest grief?

ROSS: Each minute teems a new one. *(to Macduff)* Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes savagely slaughter'd.

MALCOLM: Merciful heaven!

MACDUFF: *(shocked)* My children too?

ROSS: Wife, children, servants, all that could be found.

MACDUFF: *(weeping)* And I must be from thence! My wife kill'd too?

MALCOLM: Be comforted: let's make us medicines of our great revenge, to cure this deadly grief.

MACDUFF: He *has* no children. *(to Ross)* All my pretty ones? What, all my pretty chickens and their dam at one fell swoop?

MALCOLM: *(trying to rouse him)* Dispute it like a man!

MACDUFF: I shall do so, but I must also feel it as a man. Did heaven look on, and would not take their part? Sinful Macduff! They were all struck for thee!

MALCOLM: Let grief convert to anger!

MACDUFF: *(rousing his fury, wiping his eyes)* O, I could play the woman with mine eyes! Gentle heavens, bring thou this fiend of Scotland within my sword's length!

MALCOLM: Come! Macbeth is ripe for shaking.

Exeunt.

ACT V

SCENE I. Dunsinane. Ante-room in the castle.

Enter a Doctor and a Waiting-Gentlewoman

Doctor: When was it she last walked?

Gentlewoman: Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, take forth paper, write upon't, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doctor: A great perturbation in nature.

Enter Lady Macbeth, eyes open but sleepwalking.

Gentlewoman: Lo you, here she comes!

Lady Macbeth wanders to centre-stage as the Doctor and Gentlewoman watch. She stops and stares at her hands.

LADY MACBETH: Yet here's a spot.

Doctor: Hark! She speaks!

Lady Macbeth begins to mime the action of scrubbing and washing her hands. Memories come to her of the deeds she has participated in.

LADY MACBETH: (*distressed*) Out, damned spot! Out, I say! (*pause, now scheming*) What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? (*pause, now horrified*) Yet who would have thought the old man to have

had so much blood in him? (*pause, sad*) The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now? (*pause, frightened, looking at her hand*) All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand!

Doctor: This disease is beyond my practise.

LADY MACBETH: (*frustrated*) I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried. He cannot come out on's grave. (*pause, frantic*) To bed, to bed! There's knocking at the gate!

She runs off.

Doctor: More needs she the divine than the physician!

Exit Doctor and Gentlewoman, the opposite way.

SCENE II. Dunsinane. A room in the castle.

Enter MACBETH, Lady Macbeth's Doctor, and Seyton, Macbeth's servant, carrying armour.

MACBETH: Bring me no more reports. Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane, I cannot taint with fear.

SEYTON: There is ten thousand--

MACBETH: Geese, villain!

SEYTON: Soldiers, sir. The English force, so please you.

MACBETH: I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hack'd. Give me my armour. Hang those that talk of fear.

Seyton begins to put Macbeth's armour on. Macbeth addresses the Doctor.

MACBETH: How does your patient, doctor?

Doctor: She is troubled with thick-coming fancies that keep her from her rest.

MACBETH: Cure her of that. Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?

Doctor: Therein the patient must minister to herself.

Macbeth waves his hand, dismissing the doctor in disgust.

MACBETH: Throw physic to the dogs, then. I'll none of it.

The Doctor bows and leaves.

MACBETH: I will not be afraid of death and bane, till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

Seyton has finished adjusting the armour. Macbeth marches out. Seyton follows.

SCENE III. Country near Birnam wood.

Enter MALCOLM, SIWARD and YOUNG SIWARD, MACDUFF, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS all dressed for battle and armed.

SIWARD: What wood is this before us?

ANGUS: The wood of Birnam.

MALCOLM: Let every soldier hew him down a bough and bear't before him: thereby shall we shadow the numbers of our host.

SIWARD: We learn no other but the confident tyrant keeps still in Dunsinane.

MACDUFF: Let our just censures attend the true event, and put we on industrious soldiership.

He leads them off the opposite way.

SCENE IV. Dunsinane. Within the castle.

Enter MACBETH and SEYTON.

MACBETH: Our castle's strength will laugh a siege to scorn. Here let them lie till famine and the ague eat them up.

Lady Macbeth screams offstage.

MACBETH: What is that noise?

Seyton runs offstage to see.

MACBETH: I have almost forgot the taste of fears.

Re-enter SEYTON, looking horrified

SEYTON: The queen, my lord, is dead.

Macbeth stands shocked for a moment, then laments the futility of life.

MACBETH: She should have died hereafter. There would have been a time for such a word. To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow creeps in this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time. Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger: Gracious my lord, as I did stand my watch upon the hill, I look'd toward Birnam, and methought the wood began to move!

MACBETH: Liar and slave! If thou speak'st false, upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive! *(Giving an order)* Ring the alarum-bell!

Seyton and the messenger run offstage to obey. The bell rings.

MACBETH: What's he that was not born of woman? Such a one am I to fear, or none.

Enter YOUNG SIWARD, sword out, ready to fight.

YOUNG SIWARD: What is thy name?

MACBETH: *(eagerly drawing his sword)* My name's Macbeth.

YOUNG SIWARD: The devil himself could not pronounce a title more hateful to mine ear.

YOUNG SIWARD charges him. They fight and YOUNG SIWARD is slain easily. Macbeth laughs over his corpse.

MACBETH: Thou wast born of woman!

Enter MACDUFF, sword out, furious.

MACDUFF: Turn, hell-hound, turn!

MACBETH: *(showing fear)* Of all men else I have avoided thee. My soul is too much charged with blood of thine already.

MACDUFF: I have no words! My voice is in my sword!

Macduff attacks. They fight. Macbeth fends off Macduff and pushes him back.

MACBETH: *(laughing)* Thou lovest labour. I bear a charmed life, which must not yield to one of woman born.

MACDUFF: Despair thy charm, for Macduff was from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd.

Pause as this sinks in. Macbeth grows horrified.

MACBETH: *(afraid)* Accursed be that tongue that tells me so! I'll not fight with thee!

MACDUFF: Then yield thee, coward.

MACBETH: (*enraged*) I will not yield, to kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet! Lay on, Macduff, and damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'

They fight. The battle takes them offstage. From the opposite side comes MALCOLM, SIWARD, LENNOX, ANGUS and ROSS.

MALCOLM: (*To Siward*) Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

Ross sees Young Siward's body, and runs to it.

ROSS: Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt, but like a man he died.

SIWARD: Had he his hurts before?

ROSS: Ay, on the front.

Siward kneels by the body of his dead son and weeps.

SIWARD: Why then, God's soldier be he!

Re-enter Macduff, carrying Macbeth's head.

MACDUFF: (*to Malcolm*) Hail, king, for so thou art: behold, where stands the usurper's cursed head. Hail, King of Scotland!

ALL: Hail!

MALCOLM: (*making a proclamation*) My thanes and kinsmen, henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland in

such an honour named. Call home our exiled friends abroad that fled the snares of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen. This, and what needful else that calls upon us, by the grace of Grace, we will perform in measure, time and place.

Exeunt